

FAMILIAL VARIABLES AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SELF-ESTEEM: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL MOBILITY ASPIRATIONS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem and explored their implications for the social mobility aspirations of senior high school students in Zamboanga City. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, the quantitative phase involved 400 students selected through stratified random sampling, while the qualitative phase included 15 purposively selected participants for in-depth interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, whereas qualitative data were examined through reflexive thematic analysis. Findings revealed that respondents generally experienced supportive family relationships, attained fair academic performance, and demonstrated positive self-esteem. Several dimensions of familial involvement, particularly school communication and school-related participation, exhibited significant but weak relationships with academic performance and self-esteem, indicating that family remains an important yet non-exclusive influence on students' educational and psychological outcomes. Qualitative findings generated five themes: Education as the Family's Path to a Better Life; Family Support Builds Confidence to Dream Bigger; Academic Success Creates Opportunities for Social Advancement; Overcoming Financial Hardships Strengthens the Pursuit of a Better Future; and Success Means Uplifting the Family and Future Generations. Collectively, these findings suggest that students perceive education not merely as a means of academic achievement but as a pathway toward upward social mobility, enabling them to improve their family's socioeconomic conditions and create better opportunities for future generations.

Keywords: familial variables, academic performance, self-esteem, social mobility aspirations, senior high school students

INTRODUCTION

Education has long been recognized as one of the most effective pathways through which individuals pursue socioeconomic advancement, expand life opportunities, and overcome intergenerational disadvantage. Across many societies, educational attainment is viewed not only as a measure of academic success but also as a mechanism for improving one's quality of life and achieving upward social mobility. Despite considerable investments in educational expansion, however, inequalities in educational outcomes continue to persist, particularly among students from disadvantaged family backgrounds. In the Philippines, greater access to education has not necessarily translated into equal educational opportunities,

as socioeconomic disparities continue to shape students' academic experiences and future prospects (Ramirez Yee, 2024). Similarly, Muñoz-Carrasco (2024) argued that entrenched social class structures continue to reproduce educational inequalities across generations, limiting education's capacity to function as an equalizer of opportunity. These developments suggest that understanding students' educational outcomes requires examining the social environments in which they develop, particularly the family, which remains the primary institution influencing adolescents' educational trajectories.

Among the many factors associated with students' educational development, familial variables have consistently emerged as one of the strongest determinants of academic success and psychosocial adjustment. Contemporary scholarship increasingly conceptualizes the family not merely as a demographic background but as a source of economic, cultural, and social resources that shape learners' educational experiences. Studies have consistently shown that parental educational attainment, family socioeconomic status, parental occupation, and parental involvement significantly influence students' academic opportunities and learning outcomes (Gu et al., 2024; Ohanyelu, 2022). Likewise, Pagulayan et al. (2021) demonstrated that economic and cultural capital substantially enhance college readiness among Filipino senior high school graduates, while Colicol and Sali-Latif (2023) found that parental occupation and social class continue to influence school choice and educational opportunities despite educational reforms. Although these studies differ in their specific contexts and indicators, they converge in suggesting that family resources provide adolescents with varying degrees of educational advantage that ultimately influence their developmental outcomes.

Academic performance represents one of the most visible outcomes of these familial influences. However, recent studies indicate that students' academic achievement cannot be attributed solely to intellectual ability or classroom instruction. Instead, educational success results from the interaction of family support, school environment, learner characteristics, and personal motivation. Research has shown that learning motivation and effective learning strategies significantly contribute to academic achievement (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017), while supportive learning environments strengthen students' motivation and engagement (Regidor et al., 2024). Similarly, positive teacher–student relationships have been found to mediate the influence of socioeconomic conditions on academic performance (Xuan et al., 2019). Philippine studies likewise reveal that students' demographic characteristics and educational experiences influence academic achievement (Nicolas, 2022; Bernardo et al., 2023). More importantly, Zhang et al. (2020, 2021) demonstrated that family socioeconomic status and parental involvement remain significant predictors of academic achievement, although these relationships become stronger among adolescents who perceive greater opportunities for upward social mobility. Collectively, these findings indicate that academic performance emerges from a dynamic interaction between familial resources and students' perceptions of their future educational possibilities.

While academic performance reflects students' educational achievement, self-esteem represents the psychological dimension through which learners interpret and respond to their educational experiences. During adolescence, self-esteem influences students' confidence, persistence, resilience, and willingness to pursue academic goals despite challenges. Existing literature consistently demonstrates that supportive family environments contribute to healthier psychological functioning among adolescents. Oducado (2021) reported that self-esteem positively contributes to academic performance through greater self-directed learning, while Serrano et al. (2023) found that family and social support reduce psychological distress among Filipino senior high school students. Likewise, Buctot et al. (2021) observed that family environment varies across students with different levels of perceived academic performance, suggesting that family support contributes to both academic and psychosocial outcomes. Complementing these quantitative findings, Tauresia Kesuma et al. (2021) emphasized that students' capacity for self-regulated learning strengthens academic engagement and personal development. Taken together, these studies indicate that

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familial influences extend beyond academic achievement by shaping students' perceptions of competence, confidence, and personal worth.

More recently, educational research has shifted beyond explaining present educational outcomes toward understanding how these experiences shape adolescents' future aspirations. Increasing evidence suggests that students' educational experiences influence not only what they achieve academically but also what they believe they can become in the future. Chen et al. (2023) found that family factors significantly shape adolescents' educational aspirations alongside peer and individual influences. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2020, 2021) demonstrated that adolescents who perceive greater opportunities for upward social mobility derive stronger educational benefits from favorable family conditions. Within the Philippine context, Gimarino (2024) reported that higher self-efficacy contributes to clearer career goals among senior high school students, whereas Gaite (2025) found that Indigenous learners continue to maintain meaningful academic aspirations despite persistent socioeconomic disadvantages. These findings collectively suggest that educational experiences are closely intertwined with adolescents' aspirations for improving their future socioeconomic conditions, yet the processes through which students construct these aspirations remain insufficiently understood.

Although substantial evidence has established the relationships among familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem, existing studies have predominantly relied on quantitative approaches that explain whether these variables are associated while providing limited understanding of how students themselves interpret these educational experiences in relation to their envisioned futures. Studies examining educational aspirations or subjective social mobility have generally treated these constructs as additional measurable outcomes rather than exploring students' lived perspectives regarding upward social mobility. Consequently, there remains limited evidence explaining how family background, academic achievement, and self-esteem collectively shape adolescents' aspirations for social mobility, particularly among senior high school students in the Philippine context. Addressing this gap, the present study employs a sequential explanatory mixed methods design by first examining the relationships among familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem through quantitative analysis and subsequently exploring how these educational experiences influence students' social mobility aspirations through qualitative inquiry. The study sought to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how family influences not only adolescents' present educational outcomes but also the futures they aspire to achieve by integrating statistical relationships with students' lived narratives.

The present study was anchored on three complementary theories that collectively explain how familial contexts shape students' educational outcomes and future aspirations. First, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that human development is influenced by the dynamic interaction between individuals and the multiple environmental systems surrounding them, with the family serving as the most immediate and influential context affecting adolescents' academic and psychosocial development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This perspective provides the overarching framework for understanding how familial variables contribute to students' academic performance and self-esteem. Second, Coleman's Social Capital Theory argues that family relationships, parental involvement, and social networks constitute valuable forms of capital that facilitate children's educational success by fostering learning opportunities, guidance, and support (Coleman, 1988). This theory explains how familial resources are translated into positive educational outcomes. Finally, Bourdieu's Theory of Capital asserts that families transmit economic, cultural, and social capital, which shape individuals' educational opportunities, aspirations, and life trajectories (Bourdieu, 1986). Beyond explaining educational achievement, this theory provides the sociological lens through which students' social mobility aspirations are understood,

recognizing education as a mechanism through which individuals seek to improve their future socioeconomic position. Collectively, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for explaining the relationships among familial variables, academic performance, self-esteem, and the social mobility aspirations of senior high school students.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the relationship between familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem among senior high school students and explore how these educational experiences shape their social mobility aspirations. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents?
2. What is the level of family relationship of the respondents?
3. What is the level of the respondents' academic performance?
4. What is the level of the respondents' self-esteem?
5. Is there a significant relationship between familial variables and academic performance and self-esteem?
6. How do senior high school students describe the influence of their familial experiences, academic performance, and self-esteem on their social mobility aspirations?

METHODS

Research Design

A Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design was used. The study commenced with a quantitative descriptive-correlational phase to determine the relationships among familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem of senior high school students. The findings from the quantitative phase subsequently informed the qualitative phase, wherein selected participants were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of how their familial experiences, academic performance, and self-esteem shaped their social mobility aspirations.

Research Population and Sampling

The quantitative phase involved 400 senior high school students enrolled in selected public and private schools in Zamboanga City. The sample size was determined using Slovin's Formula, while stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation of respondents from each participating school. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be officially enrolled senior high school students during the conduct of the study, have available Grade Point Average (GPA) records, complete the research questionnaire, and voluntarily provide informed consent. Students with incomplete responses or unavailable academic records were excluded from the study.

For the qualitative phase, fifteen (15) participants were purposively selected from the quantitative respondents based on the results of the quantitative analysis to provide deeper explanations of the findings. The participants represented varying familial backgrounds, academic performance, and self-esteem levels. Only respondents who completed the quantitative phase, expressed willingness to participate, and provided informed consent for the interview were included. This sampling strategy is appropriate for explanatory sequential mixed methods research, wherein qualitative participants are intentionally selected to explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Research Instrument

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The researcher employed an adapted checklist-survey questionnaire derived from the Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Survey (YAFS). Academic performance was determined using the respondents' official Grade Point Average (GPA). Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).

For the qualitative phase, a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore how students described the influence of their familial experiences, academic performance, and self-esteem on their social mobility aspirations. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire and interview guide underwent content validation by a panel of experts. The revised instruments were pilot-tested, and internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured approval from the Graduate School, the Schools Division Office, and the principals of the participating schools. Upon approval, informed consent was obtained from all respondents and, where necessary, from their parents or guardians. The validated questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents, while permission was obtained from the school registrar to access the respondents' Grade Point Average (GPA). Following the quantitative analysis, participants were purposively selected for the qualitative phase. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and prepared for thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage described the respondents' familial profile, while mean and standard deviation determined the levels of academic performance and self-esteem. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation determined the significant relationships among the variables, whereas Simple Linear Regression determined the extent to which academic performance predicted self-esteem. Qualitative data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice as articulated in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013). Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. The researcher likewise complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). All personal information was treated with strict confidentiality. Identifiable information was removed from the dataset, electronic records were stored in password-protected devices, and printed documents were secured in locked storage accessible only to the researcher.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the profile of the respondents according to the familial variables?*

Table 1 presents the familial profile of the respondents. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents' parents had attained a college education (65.50%), while 28.00% had completed high school and only 6.50% had attained elementary education. In terms of family income, more than half of the respondents (52.25%) belonged to the low-income category, followed by the middle-income group (35.00%) and the high-income group (12.75%). With respect to family structure, most respondents (65.75%) belonged

to nuclear families, whereas the remaining respondents lived in extended families (14.50%), single-parent households (13.50%), or with step/grandparents (6.25%). Lastly, nearly half of the respondents (48.30%) reported regular attendance at religious services, while 37.30% attended occasionally and 14.50% attended rarely.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents According to Familial Variables (N = 400)

Familial Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Parents' Educational Attainment	Elementary	26	6.50
	High School	112	28.00
	College	262	65.50
Parents' Monthly Income	Low (₱15,000 and below)	209	52.25
	Middle (₱16,000–₱30,000)	140	35.00
	High (₱31,000 and above)	51	12.75
Family Type	Nuclear Family	263	65.75
	Extended Family	58	14.50
	Single Parent	54	13.50
	Step/Grandparents	25	6.25
Religiosity	Regularly Attend	193	48.30
	Occasionally Attend	149	37.30
	Rarely Attend	58	14.50

Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents generally came from families with relatively educated parents but predominantly low-income households, were mostly raised in nuclear family settings, and regularly participated in religious activities. These characteristics provide an important demographic context for examining how familial variables relate to students' academic performance and self-esteem in the succeeding analyses.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of family relationship of the respondents?*

Table 2 presents the respondents' perceived level of family relationship across various dimensions of parental and family support. Overall, the findings indicate that respondents experienced generally supportive to moderately supportive family environments, although the level of support differed across specific domains of family involvement.

Table 2: Level of Family Relationship of the Respondents

Familial Variables	Mean	Interpretation
Family Relationships	3.80	Supportive
Learning Support	3.00	Moderately Supportive
Home Enrichment	2.30	Less Supportive
Homework Supervision	2.60	Less Supportive
Home Limitation	2.80	Moderately Supportive

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Familial Variables	Mean	Interpretation
School Communication	3.00	Moderately Supportive
Volunteering	2.30	Less Supportive
Donation	2.50	Less Supportive
School Activities	2.90	Moderately Supportive

Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very Supportive; 3.41–4.20 = Supportive; 2.61–3.40 = Moderately Supportive; 1.81–2.60 = Less Supportive; and 1.00–1.80 = Not Supportive.

Among the nine dimensions, Family Relationships obtained the highest overall mean ($M = 3.80$), indicating that respondents generally perceived positive interpersonal relationships within their families. The findings suggest that parents and family members commonly demonstrated fairness in discipline, shared responsibilities, regular family meals, and mutual support, reflecting a relatively healthy family environment. Similarly, Learning Support ($M = 3.00$), School Communication ($M = 3.00$), Home Limitation ($M = 2.80$), and School Activities ($M = 2.90$) were interpreted as Moderately Supportive, indicating that parents maintained a reasonable level of involvement in monitoring academic progress, communicating with schools, regulating children's activities, and participating in school-related events.

Conversely, Home Enrichment ($M = 2.30$), Homework Supervision ($M = 2.60$), Volunteering ($M = 2.30$), and Donation ($M = 2.50$) obtained comparatively lower mean scores and were interpreted as Less Supportive. These findings suggest that while respondents generally experienced emotional support and routine parental involvement, activities requiring greater parental participation outside the home, such as educational enrichment, volunteer work, financial contributions to school programs, and direct academic supervision, occurred less frequently. Overall, the results indicate that families primarily provided support through everyday interpersonal interactions rather than through extensive participation in school-based or enrichment activities.

Research Question 3: *What is the level of the respondents' academic performance?*

Table 3 presents the academic performance of the respondents based on their Grade Point Average (GPA). The respondents obtained an overall mean GPA of 84.84 ($SD = 5.13$), which is described as Fair. This indicates that, on average, the respondents achieved a satisfactory level of academic attainment that met the expected learning standards during the academic year.

Table 3: *Academic Performance of the Respondents*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Grade Point Average (GPA)	84.84	5.13	Fair

Scale: 96–100 = Outstanding; 91–95 = Very Satisfactory; 86–90 = Satisfactory; 80–85 = Fair; and 75–79 = Passing.

The relatively moderate standard deviation suggests that the respondents' academic performance did not vary substantially, indicating that most students obtained grades that were generally clustered around the overall mean. Overall, the findings suggest that while the respondents were able to attain passing academic performance, there remains room for improvement toward achieving higher levels of academic excellence.

Research Question 4: *What is the level of the respondents' self-esteem?*

Table 4 presents the respondents' level of self-esteem as measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The respondents obtained an overall mean of 2.86, interpreted as Agree, indicating that they generally expressed positive perceptions about themselves across the different indicators of self-worth. This suggests that, on average, the respondents demonstrated a generally positive self-evaluation, reflecting confidence in their abilities, personal value, and overall self-image.

Table 4: *Level of Self-Esteem of the Respondents*

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3.40	Agree
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.*	2.20	Disagree
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	3.00	Agree
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	3.10	Agree
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.*	2.60	Agree
6. I certainly feel useless at times.*	2.40	Disagree
7. I feel that I am a person of worth.	3.00	Agree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.*	1.70	Strongly Disagree
9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.*	2.80	Agree
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3.40	Agree
Overall Mean	2.86	Agree

Scale: 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.51–3.25 = Agree; 1.76–2.50 = Disagree; 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree | Items marked () are negatively worded statements and were reverse-scored during the computation of the overall self-esteem score.*

Among the positively worded statements, the highest mean scores were obtained for "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "I take a positive attitude toward myself" ($M = 3.40$), indicating that respondents generally viewed themselves favorably. Conversely, the negatively worded statement "I wish I could have more respect for myself" obtained the lowest mean ($M = 1.70$), suggesting that most respondents strongly disagreed with this negative self-perception. Although moderate responses were observed in several negatively worded items, the overall findings indicate that the respondents generally possessed a positive level of self-esteem characterized by acceptance of themselves, recognition of their personal worth, and confidence in their capabilities.

Research Question 5: *Is there a significant relationship between familial variables and academic performance?*

Table 5 presents the relationship between the respondents' familial variables and the two outcome variables, namely academic performance and self-esteem. The results revealed that several dimensions of familial involvement demonstrated statistically significant relationships with both academic performance and self-esteem, although the pattern of relationships differed across the two outcome variables.

Table 5: *Relationship Between Familial Variables, Academic Performance, and Self-Esteem of the Respondents*

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Familial Variables	Academic Performance		Self-Esteem	
	r	p-value	r	p-value
Family Relationship	0.071	.155	0.158**	.002
Learning Support	-0.025	.618	0.197**	.000
Home Enrichment	-0.148**	.003	0.051	.307
Homework Supervision	-0.118*	.018	0.032	.521
Home Limitation	-0.125*	.012	0.029	.557
School Communication	0.173**	.001	0.123*	.014
Volunteering	-0.169**	.001	0.099*	.048
Donation	-0.020	.693	0.025	.611
School Activities	-0.127*	.011	0.196**	.000

Note. $p < .05^*$, $*p < .01$.

With respect to academic performance, significant relationships were observed for Home Enrichment ($r = -0.148$, $p = .003$), Homework Supervision ($r = -0.118$, $p = .018$), Home Limitation ($r = -0.125$, $p = .012$), School Communication ($r = 0.173$, $p = .001$), Volunteering ($r = -0.169$, $p = .001$), and School Activities ($r = -0.127$, $p = .011$). Conversely, Family Relationship, Learning Support, and Donation did not exhibit statistically significant relationships with academic performance. These findings indicate that students' academic outcomes were more closely associated with forms of parental engagement that involved interaction with the school and structured educational experiences than with general family interactions alone.

In contrast, self-esteem demonstrated significant positive relationships with Family Relationship ($r = 0.158$, $p = .002$), Learning Support ($r = 0.197$, $p < .001$), School Communication ($r = 0.123$, $p = .014$), Volunteering ($r = 0.099$, $p = .048$), and School Activities ($r = 0.196$, $p < .001$). Meanwhile, Home Enrichment, Homework Supervision, Home Limitation, and Donation were not significantly associated with self-esteem. These findings suggest that adolescents' perceptions of self-worth were more strongly related to supportive interpersonal interactions and parental engagement in their educational experiences than to direct supervision or household practices.

Overall, although several statistically significant relationships were identified, the correlation coefficients ranged from 0.099 to 0.197 in absolute value, indicating negligible to weak associations between familial variables and both academic performance and self-esteem. This suggests that while the family plays a meaningful role in adolescents' educational and psychological development, these outcomes are likewise influenced by a broader constellation of personal, school, and environmental factors. The quantitative findings therefore establish that familial variables are associated with students' academic and psychosocial outcomes, providing the empirical foundation for the qualitative phase, which explores how students interpret these familial experiences in shaping their aspirations for future social mobility.

Research Question 6: *How do senior high school students describe the influence of their familial experiences, academic performance, and self-esteem on their social mobility aspirations?*

Theme 1: Education as the Family's Path to a Better Life

Out of 15 participants, 13 expressed that their educational aspirations were closely tied to their desire to improve their family's socioeconomic condition. Participants consistently described education as the most realistic means of achieving financial stability, obtaining better employment opportunities, and providing a better quality of life for their families. Rather than viewing academic success as a personal accomplishment alone, they perceived it as a responsibility to honor their parents' sacrifices and create opportunities that were not previously available to their household. These responses suggest that students' aspirations for upward social mobility were strongly anchored in their commitment to supporting and uplifting their families through education.

"My parents always remind me that education is something nobody can take away from me. We don't always have enough, but seeing how hard they work motivates me to do well. I want to finish my studies, get a stable job, and help my family live more comfortably. I want to give back to my parents for everything they have sacrificed." (P4)

"I study because I want my family to have a better life than what we have now." (P11)

The participants viewed education as the most attainable pathway toward achieving upward social mobility and improving their family's future.

Theme 2: Family Support Builds Confidence to Dream Bigger

Among the 15 participants, 12 shared that the emotional, moral, and practical support they received from their families strengthened their confidence to pursue their educational and career goals. Participants explained that encouragement from parents and other family members helped them believe in their abilities despite academic challenges and financial limitations. They emphasized that simple expressions of trust, guidance, and reassurance from their families motivated them to persevere and remain optimistic about their future. These responses indicate that students' self-esteem was nurtured through supportive family relationships, allowing them to envision greater opportunities beyond their present circumstances.

"... my parents never make me feel like I'm a failure...and that I should keep trying. Because they believe in me, I also learned to believe in myself. Their support gives me the confidence to continue chasing my goals even when things become difficult." (P7)

"Knowing that my family believes in me makes me believe in myself too. I just hope I won't fail them because they are my greatest strength" (P2)

The participants regarded family support as a vital source of self-confidence that encouraged them to pursue greater educational and career aspirations despite life's challenges.

Theme 3: Academic Success Creates Opportunities for Social Advancement

11 participants said academic achievement as an important stepping stone toward attaining better educational and career opportunities. Participants believed that maintaining good academic performance would increase their chances of receiving scholarships, entering reputable universities, and securing stable employment in the future. They viewed their academic performance not merely as a reflection of their abilities but as an investment that could expand their opportunities and improve their family's socioeconomic condition. These responses suggest that students associated academic success with greater access to opportunities that could facilitate upward social mobility.

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"Good grades give me more opportunities, and opportunities can change my future. I can build a career that gives my family a more comfortable life. That's why I take my studies seriously because I know they can open doors that my parents never had." " (P14)

"I always remind myself that every grade I earn can affect my future. If I do well in school, I have a better chance of getting a scholarship and studying in a good university. (P9)

The participants viewed academic achievement as an essential pathway toward expanding opportunities and achieving upward social mobility.

Theme 4: Overcoming Financial Hardships Strengthens the Pursuit of a Better Future

10 participants described financial difficulties and family hardships as powerful sources of motivation rather than obstacles to achieving their aspirations. Participants acknowledged experiencing economic challenges, limited resources, and personal sacrifices throughout their educational journey. However, instead of discouraging them, these experiences reinforced their determination to succeed academically and pursue careers that would allow them to improve their family's quality of life. These responses demonstrate that adversity fostered resilience and strengthened students' commitment to achieving upward social mobility through education.

"There were times when I questioned if I could continue studying because money was always a problem at home. I saw my parents working long hours just to make sure my siblings and I could stay in school, and sometimes they would sacrifice their own needs before ours. Watching them struggle made me realize that I cannot waste the opportunities they are giving me. Instead of feeling discouraged, those experiences remind me why I have to work harder. I want to graduate, find a stable career, and eventually give my parents the kind of life they have always wanted but never had the chance to experience." (P5)

"Life hasn't always been easy for our family, and there were moments when I felt overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed. Still, every challenge has made me more determined to prove that our current situation does not have to define my future. I believe that if I continue working hard, stay focused on my studies, and remain patient, I can create opportunities not only for myself but also for my family. The hardships we experience today are the reason I refuse to give up on my dreams." (P13)

The participants perceived financial hardships as sources of resilience that strengthened their determination to pursue education as a means of achieving upward social mobility.

Theme 5: Success Means Uplifting the Family and Future Generations

9 participants stressed that success not as personal achievement alone but as the opportunity to improve their family's circumstances and create a better future for the next generation. Participants emphasized that their aspirations extended beyond obtaining a stable career or financial security. They expressed a strong desire to repay their parents' sacrifices, provide for their siblings, and ensure that their own future families would experience better opportunities than they had. These responses indicate that students viewed social mobility as a collective achievement, where personal success becomes meaningful only when it leads to the advancement and well-being of their families.

"I think about seeing my parents finally rest after years of working so hard for us. I want to be the one paying the bills instead of watching them worry about where the money will come from. I also want my younger siblings to

continue their education without experiencing the struggles that I had. If I can help my family live comfortably and give my future children better opportunities, then I can honestly say that I have succeeded in life.” (P10)

“My biggest dream is not only to change my own life but also to change my family’s future. I want my success to become the reason why our family will have more choices, better education, and a more comfortable life. Everything I do today is for that future because I believe that one person’s success can create opportunities for everyone in the family.” (P15)

The participants viewed social mobility as achieving personal success that ultimately transforms the lives of their families and future generations.

DISCUSSION

The quantitative findings indicate that the respondents generally experienced supportive family relationships, demonstrated fair academic performance, and expressed positive levels of self-esteem. The predominance of supportive family relationships suggests that the respondents were raised in environments characterized by emotional support, communication, and parental involvement, although participation in educational enrichment and school-related activities occurred less frequently. At the same time, the respondents' fair academic performance and generally positive self-esteem indicate that they possessed adequate educational and psychological resources necessary for learning and personal development. These findings support Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that the family serves as the adolescents' primary developmental context, where daily interactions, parental guidance, and family relationships influence cognitive, emotional, and educational outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Similarly, Coleman's (1988) Social Capital Theory explains that supportive family relationships provide social resources that facilitate students' learning, personal adjustment, and educational engagement. The present findings likewise align with the studies of Gu et al. (2024), who reported that positive family environments and parental involvement contribute to students' academic achievement, and Ohanyelu (2022), who found that family background significantly shapes learners' academic outcomes. Likewise, Serrano et al. (2023) emphasized that family support serves as an important protective factor that promotes adolescents' psychosocial well-being.

The correlation analysis further demonstrated that familial variables were significantly associated with both academic performance and self-esteem, although the relationships were generally negligible to weak in magnitude. Specifically, parental engagement through school communication, volunteering, and school activities showed significant associations with both outcome variables, while family relationships and learning support were more closely related to self-esteem than to academic performance. These findings suggest that the influence of families extends beyond the provision of material resources, encompassing emotional encouragement and active involvement in students' educational experiences. Such findings are consistent with Coleman's (1988) proposition that social capital embedded within family relationships facilitates educational success by strengthening communication, trust, and supportive interactions between parents and children. Likewise, Bourdieu's Theory of Capital (1986) explains that families transmit various forms of capital—including cultural and social capital—that shape students' educational opportunities and personal development. Recent empirical evidence also supports these findings. Zhang et al. (2021) demonstrated that parental involvement strengthens academic achievement by enhancing students' perceptions of social mobility, while Zhang et al. (2020) reported that family socioeconomic status and adolescents' subjective social mobility jointly influence educational outcomes. Similarly, Pagulayan et al. (2021) found that economic and cultural capital contribute to Filipino students' educational readiness,

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whereas Ramirez Yee (2024) argued that educational opportunities remain closely associated with persistent socioeconomic inequalities in the Philippines.

Although several statistically significant relationships were identified, the generally weak correlation coefficients indicate that familial variables alone do not fully explain variations in students' academic performance and self-esteem. This finding suggests that adolescent development is shaped by multiple interacting influences beyond the family, including individual characteristics, school environments, peer relationships, and broader socioeconomic conditions. Nevertheless, the significant associations reinforce the importance of family as a foundational context for students' educational and psychological development. These quantitative findings also provide a meaningful foundation for the qualitative phase of the study. While the statistical analysis established that familial variables are associated with academic performance and self-esteem, the qualitative findings further explain how students interpret these familial experiences as motivating forces that shape their aspirations for upward social mobility. This integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence strengthens the overall argument that family remains a critical influence not only on students' present educational outcomes but also on how they envision improving their future socioeconomic circumstances through education.

The qualitative findings collectively demonstrate that senior high school students perceive education as the primary mechanism through which they can achieve upward social mobility and improve their families' socioeconomic circumstances. Across the five themes, participants consistently emphasized that family support, academic achievement, resilience amid financial hardship, and aspirations to uplift their families were interconnected rather than independent experiences. Students viewed their parents' sacrifices as a source of motivation to persevere academically, while supportive family relationships strengthened their confidence to pursue long-term educational and career goals. These findings reinforce Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), which posits that the family serves as the most immediate developmental environment shaping adolescents' beliefs, behaviors, and aspirations. Likewise, Bourdieu's (1986) Theory of Capital explains that families transmit not only economic resources but also cultural values, aspirations, and social capital that influence educational attainment and future life opportunities. The participants' narratives further support recent studies emphasizing the critical role of family in shaping educational aspirations and perceived opportunities for social mobility. Chen et al. (2023) found that family factors significantly influence adolescents' educational aspirations by fostering confidence and long-term educational goals, while Zhang et al. (2021) reported that parental involvement strengthens academic achievement through adolescents' perceptions of social mobility. Within the Philippine context, Muñoz-Carrasco (2024) argued that education remains one of the most viable pathways for overcoming persistent social class barriers, whereas Ramirez Yee (2024) highlighted that despite expanding educational access, students continue to perceive academic success as a means of overcoming structural inequalities. Similarly, Pagulayan et al. (2021) emphasized that family economic and cultural capital contribute to college readiness and future educational opportunities among Filipino learners. Taken together, the qualitative findings extend the quantitative results by demonstrating that the influence of familial experiences extends beyond measurable academic performance and self-esteem; rather, students interpret these experiences as the foundation of their aspirations to transform their family's present circumstances and attain upward social mobility through education.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that familial experiences remain an important foundation of students' academic and personal development. Although the quantitative analysis revealed only weak statistical relationships between familial variables, academic performance, and self-esteem, the qualitative findings showed that students attach profound meaning to these familial experiences. Beyond measurable academic outcomes, participants consistently viewed their families as their primary source of motivation, confidence, resilience, and aspiration. This suggests that the influence of the family cannot be fully understood through statistical relationships alone but must also be appreciated through the ways students interpret and internalize their lived experiences.

The study further concludes that social mobility aspirations among senior high school students are shaped by an interplay of familial support, educational experiences, and personal beliefs about the future. Students perceived education not merely as a means of academic success but as a pathway toward improving their family's socioeconomic circumstances and creating opportunities unavailable to previous generations. Their aspirations were reinforced by supportive family relationships, sustained through positive self-perceptions, and strengthened by the belief that educational achievement could transform both individual lives and family futures. These findings underscore that social mobility is not solely an economic objective but also a deeply relational and value-driven aspiration rooted in family responsibility, gratitude, and hope.

Ultimately, this study highlights the need to view students' educational journeys within the broader social and familial contexts in which they are embedded. Efforts to improve academic outcomes should extend beyond classroom instruction by fostering meaningful family engagement, strengthening students' self-esteem, and creating equitable educational opportunities that enable learners from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to realize their aspirations.

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